

**HUMAN SERVICES COMMISSION
MINUTES OF THE MEETING
APRIL 13, 2009**

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order by Yale Cantor, Chairman at 6:30 P.M.

PRESENT: Yale Cantor, Melinda Ferry, Hassan Salley, Sue Stack, Helen Filloramo, Anne Nickerson,

OTHERS PRESENT: Gloria Talbot, Vice President, Program & Operations Nutmeg Big Brother Big Sister.

PRESENTATION: Big Brother Big Sister is a program that focuses on youth experiencing challenging situations such as poverty, unstable home life, delinquency, and issues within a school system. The program is known for its emphasis on one-on-one mentoring through its volunteer program matching youth and adult mentor. The organization prides itself on creating matches that 9 out of 10 last over a year. This is accomplished through weekly meeting between youth and mentor. The program has been successful because of intensive recruitment, careful screening, training, matching, and on-going support. Mentors are involved at least 6 to 10 hours per month with their assigned youth. Referrals are made through social workers, guidance counselors, families, DCF, and word of mouth. The Big Brother Big Sister Program offers the following mentoring programs: community-based programs, school/site-based programs, and foster grandparent program. The foster grandparent program is the only program in which mentors are paid a small stipend. Presently, the program provides service to 6 Ellington youth, their families and their teachers. The 66 year old organization serves 111 cities and towns in Connecticut. The minimum age to be a mentor is 21. The program serves children between the ages of 6 to 15. A typical match comes from a single female parent household for a mentor. There are more boys looking for male mentors. Only women can have the option of a boy or girl as a match. Couples' mentoring is a new program idea.

Nutmeg Big Brother Big Sister is seeking funding from the town because United Way funding has decreased. The organization depends on three fundraisers for the year to help defray program cost. Since all the volunteers except those in the grandparent program work free the program cost comes from the service delivery model of the time to recruit, screen and train volunteers and run criminal, background checks including sex offender list.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: The minutes of the March 9, 2009 meeting was tabled to the May 11, 2009 meeting.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT: All three transportation grant applications have been submitted. Two were sent to the State Department of Transportation (DOT) for the senior center bus replacement and the matching Dial-A-Ride Program. The third grant was delivered to (NCAAA) North Central Area Agency on Aging for the E-MATs Program. There still has been no word from DOT as to how much funding will be available for the matching grant program. Cuts to this program will have a severe impact on transportation provided by Hockanum Valley Community Council, Inc. to Ellington riders.

WFSB-Channel 3 Reporter, Tina Martin televised the AARP Tax preparation Program on Tuesday, March 31, 2009 during the early morning news program. Ms. Martin interviewed the program coordinator, Maureen Staugarten, and Helen Filloramo, preparer along residents getting their taxes prepared Erin

Graziani, Senior Center Director was also interviewed. This was a wonderful opportunity to highlight the tax program, the senior center and the Town of Ellington.

With the beginning of the warmer weather, seminars and conferences are being scheduled with topics ranging from mental health provider services, to care giver programs. Staff will be attending as many as possible to keep abreast of changes in these areas.

The fourth grade leadership class at Windermere School held a one week fundraiser for the Ellington Animal Shelter. The students under the direction of Chantal Haracsy, Youth Services raised \$411.00. Barbara Murdock, Animal control Warden was given a cashier check for \$350.00. The remaining \$111.00 was used to purchase toys, treats, food, collars and urine cleaner for the animals 'cages. This was a great idea of the students helping to give back to the community.

Kara Stauffer, a senior at Ellington High School and a Girl Scout candidate working on her gold award project created, organized and supervised a program for elementary students at all three schools. Currently there are 100 students participating in the program and we had a wait list of at least 30 students. Kara is currently running a total of six recess groups Monday –Thursday. (See attached flyer). This program has been a big hit with teachers, parents, and students at all three schools. The program emphasizes problem solving around making friends, handling stress and bullying by teaching strategies to deal with these issues.

The Choices program ran two classes for 3rd and 4th grade girls and boys. The boys' program contacted American Karate to help co-facilitate. The six week program meets for an hour and focuses on communication skills, self-confidence, control and dealing with emotions, and leadership.

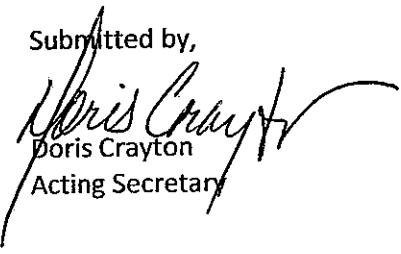
The Tutoring Program has been so successful at the 5th and 6th grade that a homework club was created for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grade at Windermere and Center Schools. 17 Middle School volunteers work with the elementary students. The program runs one day a week for six weeks from 3:30 P.M. to 5:00 P.M. teachers were hired as supervisors at the two schools.

OLD BUSINESS: Budget hearing begins on April 7th at the high school. Deliberations will begin on April 21st and 23rd. The senior center budget was carefully reviewed by the Board of Selectmen with focus on the increased hours for the van drivers. Next year's budget will have more statistics/ graphs to show the change from year to year in hours, and riders.

NEW BUSINESS: The Ellington Community Church Outreach held its second meeting at Human Services on Wednesday, April 1st. The group made up of local clergymen/women meet to discuss gaps in social service programming and how to close those gaps. Topics discussed were uninsured dental care for the elderly, camp scholarships, food bank needs, and creating a diaper bank. The group will meet again in June but for now the focus will be on day camp scholarships.

ADJOURNMENT: The chairman, Yale Cantor closed the meeting at 7:35 P.M.

Submitted by,


Doris Crayton
Acting Secretary